

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5627

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 03585

E.O. 11652: GDS TAGS: PFOR, SP

SUBJ: CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

1. GREGORIO LOPEZ BRAVO, CHAIRMAN OF THE CORTES COMMISSION ON FUNDAMENTAL LAWS, CAME IN TO SEE ME MAY 6. LOPEZ BRAVO, FORMER FONMIN WITH OPUS DEI CONNECTIONS, HAD BEEN ORIGINALLY SELECTED TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSION, BUT ACCORDING TO HIM, THE KING HAD CALLED HIM AND ASKED HIM TO TAKE ON HIS PRESENT JOB WHICH HANDLES MOST OF THE PRINCIPAL REFORM ISSUES IN THE CORTES CONTEXT.

2. LOPEZ BRAVO SAID HE WAS FULLY BEHIND THE REFORM PROGRAM AND UNDER THE NEW URGENCY PROCEDURE HE HAD THE SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF HIS COMMISSION MEET EVERY DAY UNDER HIS CHAIRMANSHIP TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT LAWS ON POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ON THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY. THE DRAFT CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ON THE BICAMERAL LEGISLATURE HAD NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED BY THE GOS, BUT IT WAS EXPECTED THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. IT WOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE MOVEMENT WHERE THERE WOULD BE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BLUSTERING, BUT HE ANTICIPATED NO PARTICULAR PROBLEM. LOPEZ BRAVO DID NOT THINK THAT IT HAD YET BEEN FULLY DECIDED THAT THE NEW SENATE WOULD ONLY BE ELECTED INDIRECTLY. HE THOUGHT IT WAS STILL AN OPEN QUESTION WITH RESPECT TO THE ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MUNICIPALITIES BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE. THERE WERE DIFFERING VIEWS ON THIS AND HE WAS AWARE THAT CONSIDERABLE PRESSURES WERE BEING EXERTED TO MAKE THE SENATE LOOK LESS LIKE A MERE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

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3. LOPEZ BRAVO SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE LAW OF SUCCESSION

AND THE REFORM OF THE LAW OF THE CORTES TO PROVIDE FOR A BICAMERAL LEGISLATURE WOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF JUNE. HE BELIEVED IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE GOVT NOT WAIT UNTIL OCT TO HAVE THE REFERENDUM AND HE SAID THAT HE WAS DOING EVERYTHING HE COULD FROM THE KING ON DOWN TO PURSUADE ALL CONCERNED THAT AN EARLIER REFERENDUM WAS NECESSARY. WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT ARIAS DID NOT SEEM DISPOSED TO THIS IDEA, LOPEZ BRAVO RECALLED ARIAS HAD BEEN KNOWN TO CHANGE HIS MIND BEFORE AS FOR EXAMPLE IN REVERSING THE ORDER OF THE MUNICIPAL AND LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.

4. REGARDING THE ELECTORAL LAW WHICH DOES NOT REQUIRE REFERENDUM, HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE ANY DELAY IN ITS APPROVAL ONCE IT WAS SUBMITTED TO THE CORTES IN JULY. STRANGELY ENOUGH, LOPEZ BRAVO BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER NOT TO HOLD GENERAL ELECTIONS UNTIL THE SPRING OF 1977 IN ORDER TO PERMIT POLITICAL PARTIES PROPERLY TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES. I SAID THAT THIS DID NOT SEEM TO FIT IN WITH HIS PREVIOUS VIEW THAT THE REFERENDUM SHOULD BE HELD EARLIER AND I WONDERED WHETHER IT REALLY WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO PUT OFF SUCH SIGNIFICANT ELECTIONS UNTIL LATER ON. WHEN I ASKED HIM WHETHER IF THE INDIRECT METHODS OF ELECTIONS IN THE SENATE WERE MAINTAINED IT MADE SENSE TO HAVE THOSE ELECTIONS BEFORE THE NEW MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, HE REPLIED SOMEWHAT UNCONVINCINGLY THAT HE DOUBTED WHETHER IN THE ELECTIONS FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCILS THERE WOULD BE MANY IMPORTANT CHANGES. THEREFORE MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE INDIRECTLY ELECTED TO THE SENATE (ASSUMING THAT THE INDIRECT SYSTEM WERE ADOPTED) WOULD IN FACT BE THOSE RE-ELECTED IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

5. LOPEZ BRAVO WAS QUITE CRITICAL OF THE PROCEDURE OF CERTAIN MINISTERS MAKING DECLARATIONS TO FOREIGN PRESS WHILE REMAINING SILENT WITH THE SPANISH PRESS. HE ALSO BELIEVED THAT THE PRESENT EFFORTS TO CHASE AFTER EUROPE, WHICH SHOWED LITTLE SIGN OF RECIPROCATING, WERE NOT A VERY DIGNIFIED OR PRODUCTIVE APPROACH. (IT MUST, OF COURSE, BE REMEMBERED THAT LOPEZ BRAVO IS STILL YOUNG AND IS FULL OF AMBITION. HE OBVIOUSLY HOPES IN THE NEXT GO-AROUND THAT HE WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT CABINET POSITION.) FINALLY, LOPEZ BRAVO EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT IN THE WHOLE REFORM PROGRAM THE GOVT MUST TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE FACT THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF SPANIARDS OWE THEIR ECONOMIC PROGRESS TO THE STABILITY OF THE FRANCO REGIME. IT WAS THEREFORE CONFIDENTIAL

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MOST IMPORTANT THAT IN FORMULATING ITS PROGRAM THE GOVT ESTABLISH A RHYTHM WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE AND WHICH DOES NOT ALIENATE THE MODERATE RIGHT.
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